

AMENDMENTS

The following listing of claims replaces, without prejudice, all previous versions and listings.

1-24 (Canceled)

25. (New) A base for supporting an article during shipping, comprising:
a frame having one or more side edges, each side edge adapted to extend along a side of an article,

the base having one or more sockets having internal sidewalls defining open ended wells in the frame that form receptacles for receipt and engagement of feet of the article;

a plurality of flexible ribs extending along the internal sidewalls of the sockets and projecting inwardly into the wells of the sockets, the ribs adapted to deform in response to the engagement with the feet of the article upon insertion into the sockets.

26. (New) A base as claimed in claim 25 for supporting a four-sided article, wherein the frame has four sides, each side adapted to extend along one of the four sides of the article with relatively outer peripheral edge portions of the base positioned adjacent bottom surfaces of the article.

27. (New) A base as claimed in claim 26, wherein an outer peripheral edge of each of the sides of the frame is recessed relative to an inner portion of the base along the corresponding side, creating a gap between the base and adjacent portions of the article along each side thereof.

28. (New) A base as claimed in claim 25, wherein the ribs in the one or more sockets are vertically positioned and project radially inward from the sidewalls.

29. (New) A base as claimed in claim 28, wherein the ribs are beveled at their upper edges adjacent the open end of the wells.

30. (New) A base as claimed in claim 25, wherein the ribs are positioned axially within the wells of the sockets.

31. (New) A base as claimed in claim 25, wherein a bottom edges of the ribs are separated from bottom walls of the sockets.

32. (New) A base as claimed in claim 25, wherein a relatively outer peripheral edge portion of at least one side of the frame is recessed relative to inner portions of the frame along the at least one side, the recess of the outer edge portion along the at least one side creating a gap between the base and adjacent portions of the article.

33. (New) A base for shipping and supporting an appliance, comprising:
a frame having one or more side edges, each side edge adapted to extend along a side of an appliance,

the base having at least one socket that defines an open ended well for receipt of a foot of the appliance;

a plurality of flexible ribs extending along an internal sidewall of the socket and projecting inwardly into the well of the socket, the ribs adapted to deform in response to engagement with the foot of the appliance upon insertion into the socket to grip the foot of the appliance in the socket to maintain the appliance and the base together.

34. (New) A base as claimed in claim 33, wherein a relatively outer peripheral edge portion of at least one side edge of the frame is recessed relative to an inner portion of the base, the recess of the outer edge along the at least one side edge creating a gap between the base and an adjacent side of the appliance supported thereon and permitting the outer edge portion to bow upwards without damaging the side of the appliance.

35. (New) A base as claimed in claim 34, wherein a relatively outer peripheral edge of each of the side edges of the frame is recessed relative to inner portions thereof, creating a gap between the base and adjacent portions of the appliance along each side thereof.

36. (New) A base as claimed in claim 33, wherein the ribs are positioned axially within the well of the socket.

37. (New) A base as claimed in claim 33, wherein the ribs are beveled adjacent the upper edge of the socket to facilitate insertion of the foot of the appliance into the socket.

38. (New) A base as claimed in claim 33, wherein bottom edges of the ribs are separated from a bottom wall of the socket.

39. (New) A base for shipping and supporting an appliance having an internal structural frame and at least one outer skin panel portion attached thereto, the base comprising:

a frame having one or more side edges adapted to extend adjacent one or more sides of the structural frame portion or outer skin panel portion of the appliance,

a relatively outer peripheral edge portion of at least one side edge of the frame being recessed relative to inner portion of the base along the at least one side, the recess of the outer edge portion along the at least one side creating a gap between the base and an adjacent structural frame or skin panel portion of the appliance supported thereon and permitting the outer edge portion to bow upwards without damaging the adjacent structural frame or skin panel portion of the appliance,

one or more sockets in the frame that define open ended wells for receipt of one or more feet of the appliance, and

a plurality of flexible ribs extending along internal sidewalls of the one or more sockets and projecting inwardly into the wells of the one or more sockets, the ribs adapted to deform in response to engagement with the one or more feet of the appliance upon insertion into the one or more sockets, wherein the ribs are beveled adjacent upper edges of the one or more sockets to facilitate insertion of the one or more feet of the appliance into the one or more sockets.

40. (New) A base for shipping and supporting an appliance having an internal structural frame and an outer skin attached thereto, the base comprising:

a frame having one or more side edges adapted to extend adjacent one or more sides of the structural frame or outer skin of the appliance,

a relatively outer peripheral edge portion of at least one side of the frame being recessed relative to an inner portion of the base along the at least one side, the recess of the outer edge portion along the at least one side creating a gap between the base and an adjacent part of said structural frame or skin of the appliance supported thereon and permitting the outer edge portion to bow upwards without damaging the adjacent structural frame or skin of the appliance,

at least one socket in the frame that defines an open ended well forming a receptacle for receipt of a foot of the appliance, and

a plurality of flexible ribs extending along the internal sidewall of the socket and projecting inwardly into the well of the socket, the ribs adapted to deform in response to the engagement with the foot of the appliance upon insertion into the socket, wherein bottom edges of the ribs are separated from a bottom wall of the socket.

41. (New) A base for shipping and supporting an appliance, comprising:

a frame having one or more side edges, each side edge adapted to extend along a side of an appliance,

the base having one or more sockets that define open ended wells for receipt of the feet of the appliance;

a plurality of flexible fins extending along an internal sidewall of the socket and projecting inwardly into the well of the socket, the fins adapted to deflect sideways in response to the engagement with the foot of the appliance upon insertion into the socket.

42. (New) A base for shipping and supporting an appliance, comprising:

a frame having sides surrounding an opening, each side of the frame adapted to extend along a side of an appliance,

the frame having at least one socket that has an internal sidewall defining an open ended well for receipt of a foot of the appliance;

a plurality of flexible fins extending along the internal sidewall of the socket and projecting inwardly into the well of the socket, the fins adapted to deflect sideways in response to engagement with the foot of the appliance upon insertion into the socket.

43. (New) A base as claimed in claim 42, wherein an outer peripheral edge of at least one said side of the frame is recessed relative to an inner portion of said one side, creating a gap between the base and an adjacent portion of the article along said one side.

44. (New) A base as claimed in claim 43 for supporting a four-sided article, wherein the frame has four sides, each side adapted to extend along one of the four sides of the article, and an outer peripheral edge of each of the sides of the frame is recessed relative to an inner portion of the base along the corresponding side, creating a gap between the base and adjacent portions of the article along each side thereof.